DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 134 273 JC 770 113

AUTHOR Hamrick, Susan D.
TITLE German Studies and the Community College.
PUB DATE Dec 76
NOTE 15p.; Seminar paper, University of Arizona

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Enrollment Trends; *German; *Junior Colleges; *Language Enrollment; Language Instruction; Program Development; *Program Improvement

ABSTRACT

Since the late 1960's, German studies, like foreign language studies in general, have been on the decline. Part of the decline in foreign language enrollments can be attributed to higher education's declining rate of enrollment growth, part to elimination of language requirements for degree recipients, and part to shifting program emphases. A review of German offerings in comprehensive community colleges show that German is offered at a minimum level with only 49 institutions offering German programs leading to the Associate in Arts degree. Despite depressed enrollment statistics and trends toward vocational/scientific studies, neither liberal arts nor German study is on the way out. Such factors as requirement of German for scientific study, the large number of Americans of German descent with pride and interest in their ancestry, and Germany's rising political and economic status all work together to create demand for German studies. However, German departments must also do their share to attract and retain students. New techniques, laboratory resources, and curricula need development and implementation. Relevance and interest can be enhanced through study of German culture. Community college emphasis in German studies should be on practical speaking, reading, and writing. A bibliography is attached. (JDS)

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German Studies and the Community College

by

Susan D. Hamrick

Dr. R. Schultz
HED 360
December, 1976

JC 770 113

German studies has long been a part of the curriculum in higher education. Since the late 1960's German stusies, along with foreign language studies in general, has been on the decline. Information, particularly current information, on the status of German studies in higher education is scarce. Most existing surveys of current foreign language enrollments do not separate individual languages. Information on German in two-year colleges is even harder to find. The Modern Language Association's statistics on foreign languages do not distinguish community colleges from four-year institutions.

The present situation in German studies is not encouraging. Foreign language requirements at many colleges and universities have been reduced and in some cases eliminated altogether. Many German departments are in deep trouble, and some have already been closed. Declining enrollments, the reduction of departmental budgets, and crippled research programs have resulted in the unemployment of German instructors at every level. In the light of this, preparing for a career in German education may not be very practical, although German is useful in many business and science careers. The employment situation in German is not as bad as in the areas of history, linguistics, or philosophy.[1]

In 1960, according to Donald Rosenberg, foreign languages held a 17% share of the undergraduate curriculum and that of German claimed 24%. By 1972 foreign languages' share had dropped to 10.5% while German's share of that percentage had dropped to

19.6%.[2] Richard Brod states that the peak year for foreign language enrollments in higher education was 1968.[3] Most of the decline indicated by Rosenberg, therefore, must have taken place after 1968. Brod's summary of the MLA's fall 1972 survey of foreign language enrollments in all of higher education shows that while the drop in German enrollments between 1968 and 1970 was only 6.3% it had doubled to 12.6% between 1970 and 1972. Basing his conclusions on this information and a limited 1974 survey by the MLA, Brod states that the downward trend does not only show no sign of ending but may even be accelerating.[4]

According to Brod, early research had proven the direct relationship between declining enrollments in foreign languages and the reduction or elimination of foreign language requirements for the B.A. Those languages which suffer most are those that the public mind most closely associates with "the academic benefits of language study and indeed with the intellectual traditions of Western Civilization."[5] Corresponding with the declining emphasis on the liberal arts curriculum, areas considered more practical have been receiving increased attention. The decline in Spanish registrations had been less than in German, French, or Latin. Because of the proximity of a Spanish-speaking nation to the U.S. and the large Spanish-speaking population within the country it is considered more practical. The increases in Russian, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Hebrew, and a few others are a result of two factors: the increase in the political importance

of the nation whose populace speaks one of those languages and increasing pride in ethnic backgrounds.

Although reduced foreign language requirements are the major cause of declining enrollments other factors contribute to the decline. First, the growth rate of enrollments in all of higher education has begun to level off to 1.8%.[6] Second, this growth is shifting from four-year to two-year and from private to public colleges, from degree-credit to non-degree-credit, from liberal arts programs to vocational programs. All of these changes bode ill for German studies. The situation is particularly bad in two-year colleges where Spanish, primarily because of its practical aspects, is strongest, holding 51% of total foreign language enrollments, and where the liberal arts transfer function is making way for the growing occupational and coomunity service functions.[7]

At the present time German is offered in mostly coomunity colleges at a minimum level. Most offer only introductory, intermediate, and/or conversational German. Only forty-nine comprehensive community colleges offer German programs leading to the Associate of Arts degree. Just what an Associate of Arts degree in German means besides the completion of a two-year transfer program for students intending to major in German in a four-year college is difficult to determine.

Of the forty-nine community colleges offering the A.A. degree, sixteen are located in California, four in Texas, three in Florida, Missouri, and Oregon, two in Illinois, Nebraska, and Washington, and one each in Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland,

Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, and the Canal Zone.[8] The geographical distribution of these colleges is interesting and in some cases even a little surprising. As could be expected, those states with the most highly developed community college systems, California, Florida, New York, Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, all have at least one college offering the Associate of Arts degree in German. On the other hand, two states with limited systems, Idaho and North Dakota, also have colleges offering the degree. It may be that a large number of people of German descent in North Dakota is the reason behind the college there offering the degree. Taking this approach, it is suprising that a number of midwestern states do not offer the Associate of Arts degree in German and Pennsylvania has only one college offering it.

Some interesting conclusions may be drawn from an examination of the courses offered by these colleges. Of the forty-nine colleges I chose a sample of twelve colleges from all the areas of the U.S. For comparison purposes, I chose more than one college from some states. The following is a listing of the colleges and their 1974-1975 course offerings.

Foothill Community College (this college is on a quarter system)

1	Beginning German	4 credits
2	Elementary German	4 credits
3	Elementary German (continuation of 2)	4 credits

4	Intermediate German	4 credits
5	Intermediate German (continuation of 4)	4 credits
6	Intermediate German (continuation of 5)	4 credits
13a	Intermediate Conversation	2 credits
13b	Advanced Conversation (continuation of 13a)	2 credits
25a	Advanced Composition and Reading	4 credits
25b	Advanced Composition and Reading (continuation of 25a)	4 credits
30	German Pronunciation	2 credits
50	German for Travelers	2 credits

De Anza Community College

De Anza is one of the colleges in the Foothill Community College District. Its course offerings are the same as Foothill Community College with the following additions:

13c	Advanced Conversation (continuation of 13b)	2 credits
25c	Advanced Composition and Reading (continuation of 25b)	4 credits

El Camino College

1	Elementary German I	4 credits
2	Elementary German II	4 credits
3	Intermediate German I	4 credits
3s	Scientific (Intermediate) German	4 credits
4	Intermediate German II	4 credits
5	Advanced German I	3 credits
6	Advanced German II	3 credits
21a,b	Beginning Conversational German	2 credits
22a,b	Intermediate Conversational German	2 credits

Community College of San Francisco

1	Elementary German	5 credits
2	Continuation of Elementary German	5 credits
3	Intermediate German	5 credits
10a-10b	Beginning Practical Spoken German	3-3 credits
39a-39b	German Literature in Translation	3-3 credits

Florida

Brevard Community College

101-102	Elementary German	4 credits
211-121	Intermediate German	4 credits

Illinois

William Rainey Harper

101	Elementary German I	4 credits
102	Elementary German II (continuation of 101)	4 credits
201	Intermediate German	4 credits
202	Intermediate German (continuation of 201)	4 credits
205	Intensive Oral Practice	3 credits
210	Introduction to Modern German Literature	3 credits

Maryland

Anne Arundel Community College

111	Elementary German I	3 credits
112	Elementary German II (continuation of 111)	3 credits
211	Intermediate German I	3 credits
212	Intermediate German II (continuation of 211)	3 credits
231	German Civilization	3 credits

Missouri

Maple Woods Community College

20	German for Travelers	2 credits
101	Elementary German I	5 credits
102	Elementary German II (continuation of 101)	5 credits
129	Directed Reading	1 credit
203	Intermediate German	3 credits
204	The German Novelle	3 credits
205	German Conversation	2 credits
206	German Composition	2 credits
209	Survey of Modern German Drama	3 credits

Penn Valley Community College

Penn Valley's course offerings are identical with those of Maple Woods with the addition of the following two courses:

207 Survey of German Literature
208 Readings in Scientific and Technical German

Oregon

Blue Mt. Community College

50, 51, 52	First Year German	4 credits each
101, 102, 103	Second Year German	4 credits

Texas

Henderson County Junior College

113	Conversational German (not for major or minor credit)	
114	Elementary German (continuation of 113)	3 credits
124	Intermediate German	3 credits

Tarrant County Junior College

1614	Elementary German
1624	Elementary German II
2611	Language Practicum
2613	Intermediate German I
2623	Intermediate German II
2633	German Language and Culture I
2643	German Language and Culture II

Of these twelve colleges three, Brevard, Blue Mt., and Henderson, do not offer courses beyond the intermediate level. Four others, San Francisco, William Rainey Harper, Anne Arundel, and Tarrant County offer one or two additional conversation and/or culture courses to round out their curricculums. The remaining five, Foothill, De Anza, El Camino, Maple Woods, and Penn Valley have more extensive course offerings. It is interesting that three colleges offer only the traditional minimum

courses and yet still offer the transfer degree with a German major while many colleges not offering the A.A. degree in German offer more courses. The degrees from these three colleges signify little more than completion of a liberal arts transfer program with a two-year language requirement.

The remaining eleven colleges have somewhat more meaningful curriculum. The five with the most extensive programs are located in only two states, California and Missouri. The three colleges in California have similar programs, with two, Foothill and De Anza, offering almost identical courses. These two colleges are both a part of the same community college district and have probably worked cooperatively on their programs. Interestingly enough, none of the three colleges offer a specific literature or culture course. The intermediate, advanced, and conversational courses, however, are designed to incorperate both literature and culture. The two Missouri colleges, Maple Woods and Penn Valley, also have almost identical course offerings. Both offer specific literature courses as well as the traditional survey course. Like Foothill and De Anza they also offer a German course for travellers. Penn Valley, like El Camino, also offers a course in scientific German. For the most part, however, the programs of these colleges are fairly traditional and are transfer-oriented. The course on Modern German Literature offered at Penn Valley and Maple Woods was a refreshing surprise. It is indicative of increased efforts to make the study of German more interesting and relevant to the student.

In spite of declining enrollment statistics and discouraging trends toward vocational and scientific areas, the liberal arts curriculum is not on its way out. Nor is German. German will probably never disappear from the college curriculum although future decline is almost assured. The study of German is still required in many of the sciences and even where it is not, it is still recognized as a valuable research tool. In addition, a large number of Americans are of German descent. Pride and interest in their ancestry has and will motivate many students to study German. One cannot deny also the rising stature of Germany among the world's nations, both politically and economically. Its importance in these areas is recognized by many students, particularly those in political science, international relations, business and related fields. There will probably always be, therefore, although admittedly on a smaller scale, a market for German studies in higher education even if the foreign language requirement is completely abolished.

German departments must also do their share to attract and retain students. New technique, laboratory resources, and curriculums must be developed. In addition, increased emphasis needs to be focused upon making the study of German more enjoyable, meaningful, and relevant. One way to do this is through the study of culture. Only through the study of a nation's culture can its language be fully understood and appreciated. Too often culture is sacrificed to make way for more grammar or vocabulary, particularly specialized courses directed toward business or science majors. The need for the understanding of culture is

being increasingly recognized. Even in the business world culture has begun to be seen "as an essential ingrediant in the language training need by specialists in international commerce."[9]

In addition, the study of German must be designed to meet student's needs. A course for business or science students can be designed to meet their needs in a well-rounded course incorporating basic language skills, culture, and specialized information. Students who take German because they plan to travel to Germany should have access to a course which will teach them the skills needed to get along in Germany without being bogged down with grammar. Most people find a trip to a foreign country more enjoyable if they know some of the language and many students have returned with an increased appreciation of Germany and a desire to study further.

One way in which German departments have tried to combat declining enrollments is through diversification.[10] New and expanded course offerings in literature in translation, modern literature, and related languages such as Yiddish and the Scandinavian languages are attracting students to take courses offered by German departments as electives. This technique is primarily useful for four-year colleges, though community colleges could benefit as well.

I feel, however, that in community colleges the emphasis should be on practical speaking, reading, and writing ability, with the most emphasis on conversation courses, for the student who finds he can communicate in another language is encouraged by this ability. Like all colleges, the community college must

try to make its courses more effective, innovative, and relevant. In addition, the German program in community colleges should be designed to meet the needs of the whole community as well as its traditional transfer students. Those colleges in areas with large numbers of people of German descent might find a course on German art, music, or even cooking, a popular one. Increased effort needs to be directed towards finding out just what the needs and desires of the students and community are. Innovative teachers and administrators must place greater emphasis on designing and teaching courses to meet these demands. This may not only help enrollments but will probably improve the overall quality of German programs as well.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Richard Brod, "German Studies in U.S. Colleges: Status and Outlook," Die Unterrichtspraxis 2 (1974), p. 2.

[2]Donald K. Rosenberg, "German Studies for Today: Broad Boundaries, Oblique Paths," Die Unterrichtspraxis 2 (1974), p. 2.

[3]Brod, p. 3.

[4]Brod, p. 3.

[5]Brod, p. 3.

[6]Brod, p. 3.

[7]Brod, p. 4.

[8]CCM Information Corporation, The College Blue Book, (New York: 1972).

[9]Brod, p.4.

[10]Jere, Fleck, "Scandinavian Studies and German Department Enrollments," Die Unterrichtspraxis 1 (1973), pp. 63-64.

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Rosenberg, Donald K. "German Studies for Today: Broad Boundaries, Oblique Paths." Die Unterrichtspraxis, 2 (1974), 31-35.

1974-1975 Community College Catalogs (individual catalogs and michrofiche):
Anne Arundel Community College, Maryland
Blue Mt. Community College, Oregon
Brevard Community College, Florida
Community College of San Francisco, California
De Anza Community College, California
El Camino Community College, California
Foothill Community College, California
Henderson County Junior College, Texas
Maple Woods Community College, Missouri
Penn Valley Community College, Missouri
Tarrant County Junior College, Texas
William Rainey Harper, Illinois

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